

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I would first like to commend my good friend and colleague from American Samoa, ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, for introducing this important measure. He has been the leader in Congress on matters related to the legacy of nuclear testing, both in the former Soviet Union and in the Pacific, and we greatly appreciate his hard work.

Madam Speaker, upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly-minted independent nation of Kazakhstan found itself in possession of the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Kazakhstan inherited more than 1,000 nuclear weapons and a squadron of heavy bombers armed with 370 nuclear warheads from the Soviet Union.

Rather than embrace their nuclear status, the people of Kazakhstan made a farsighted decision fifteen years ago. They closed their nation's nuclear test site, and yielded all of their inherited nuclear arsenal and weapons materials back to Russia.

Kazakhstan, the victim for so long of Soviet domination, completely and voluntarily rescinded their membership in the nuclear club. The nation proudly joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or "NPT", as a non-nuclear weapon state, the first time a state that had possessed such a massive nuclear arsenal had done so.

While Kazakhstan made a wise decision to rid itself of its nuclear arsenal, the damage to the environment and to the health of the people of Kazakhstan will be felt for decades to come. Between 1945 and 1991, more than 450 nuclear tests were conducted at the Semipalatinsk test site, exposing more than 1.5 million innocent people to radiation and causing massive damage to the environment.

It is for that reason that the United States should work with Kazakhstan to establish a joint working group to help assess the environmental damage and health affects caused by the nuclear testing.

Madam Speaker, Kazakhstan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, and to nuclear disarmament, is an inspiring one, and a shining example for others to follow. It has strengthened immeasurably the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and we greatly appreciate these actions.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in doing likewise.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 905.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was commu-

nicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

COMMENDING AND SUPPORTING RADIO AL MAHABA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 784) commending and supporting Radio Al Mahaba, Iraq's first and only radio station for women.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 784

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba, Iraq's first and only radio station for women, went on the air on April 1, 2005;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba is an educational tool, broadcasting in three different languages and giving women freedom to voice opinions and hear other opinions;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba airs shows dedicated to women's rights and women's issues;

Whereas such shows are devoted to relationships, parenting, and other social topics;

Whereas despite terrible risks, the staff of Radio Al Mahaba works at the station because they want to reach out and touch people's lives, and they want to give hope, knowledge, empowerment, support, and a passage to freedom to Iraqi women;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba, amid the struggles in Iraq, has followed the examples of the United States which guarantees freedoms of speech and the press, thereby encouraging Iraqis to build an open, democratic civil society;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba has a positive, important role in educating women;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba provides women with freedom of speech;

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba provides an opportunity for women to secure their role in the governance of a civil society within Iraq; and

Whereas Radio Al Mahaba meets a palpable need of Iraqi women: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the efforts of Radio Al Mahaba to provide Iraqi women with freedom of speech and an opportunity for women to be included in and informed of the reconstruction of Iraq with an open, democratic civil society;

(2) supports the mission of Radio Al Mahaba; and

(3) urges Al Mahaba to continue its important work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

□ 1600

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 784, introduced by our colleague Mrs. MCCARTHY, and a measure of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor, commends and supports Iraq's first and only radio station for women, Al Mahaba. All of us who have spent time in the Middle East know of the courage that it takes for women to take to the airwaves and provide education and information for women.

It was April 1, 2005, when Al Mahaba first went on the air. Despite personal risk, these courageous people took to the airwaves, in the words of the resolution, to reach out and touch people's lives, and give hope, knowledge empowerment, support and a passage to freedom to Iraqi women.

Its commitment was to serve as an important education resource for women, for broadcasting in three languages, and enabling women to hear, some for the very first time, messages about women's rights and women's issues. Radio Al Mahaba provides a forum for women to voice their opinions and to hear the opinions of other women who face the complexities of life for women in the Middle East.

The programming on Al Mahaba deals with issues specifically focused on women, which includes such important topics as relationships, parenting and other social issues which are not dealt with in other media. This radio station, which operates within the aura of what we in America know as our first amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of the press, is a wonderful example to Iraqi women and Iraqi people nationwide of the benefits of freedom. It plays an important role in paving the way for women to have more of a fundamental impact on Iraqi society.

House Resolution 784 appropriately commends the efforts of these pioneers. It supports the mission of Radio Al Mahaba and it encourages it to continue with its important work. I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to commend and thank my good friend and colleague from New York, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, for sponsoring this very important measure.

Mr. Speaker, our intervention in Iraq and its aftermath have not been without controversy, but there are some developments there that I know every Member of this body is happy to embrace. Radio Al Mahaba represents just such a development.

Radio Al Mahaba is a unique phenomenon in the Middle East, a radio station for women dealing with issues of interest to women, and, more importantly, run by women.

In a society where a majority of women are illiterate, radio is a vital

means of imparting information. Of course, female illiteracy is a problem in virtually every state in the Islamic Middle East, which is precisely why Radio Al Mahaba is a model for the region.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that Radio Al Mahaba is a fully independent radio station, both politically and religiously. It is surely one of the few Iraqi radio stations, some say the only one, that can be described in that way.

Mr. Speaker, Radio Al Mahaba was founded 1 year ago with a \$500,000 grant from the United Nations Development Fund for Women. It started out broadcasting 6 hours a day; and as a result of its incredible popularity, it was up to 16 hours a day very soon thereafter. Unfortunately, it was forced to cut back after terrorists destroyed its transmitter. Nonetheless, Al Mahaba carries on.

Radio Al Mahaba is a beacon of free expression for Iraqi women, and it has the potential to make a remarkable contribution to the political and cultural growth of Iraqi society as a whole. It deserves the support of every Member of this body, as does the resolution commending its work.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and urge all of our colleagues to do likewise.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York, the sponsor of the resolution, CAROLYN MCCARTHY.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from New York for allowing me to speak on this, and I also want to thank my colleague from Florida, who has been a sponsor. We actually had a trip of women that went to Iraq and saw firsthand how important it is for the Iraqi women to have a voice.

Historically, Iraqi women were extremely well educated, but the educational suppression brought on by Saddam Hussein led to the illiteracy rate of women rising to almost 75 percent.

After Saddam was ousted, Bushra Jamil, an Iraqi who was living in Canada, saw an opportunity to empower the women of Iraq as it transitioned to democracy. Bushra returned home and created Radio Al Mahaba, the Middle East's only radio station for women. The station became so popular that they were broadcasting, as my colleague had said, 16 hours a day in three languages, Arabic, Kurdish and English.

While we take radio shows that cater to women for granted, this was a revolutionary concept in the Middle East. Women who had been oppressed for years were finally able to hear their side of the story.

The radio station provided a forum for women to make sure their voices were heard. The station received 100 calls a day from women asking questions, giving advice and voicing their opinions on the rebuilding of their

country. The radio station had found an audience, and they were now financially sustainable through sponsorships.

But last October, unfortunately, the radio station fell silent. The terrorist attack on the Palestinian hotel in Baghdad destroyed their transmitter. And while the station was not the target of this attack, many leaders in Iraq were not all upset that these women's voices were silenced.

They found another transmitter, but it wasn't as powerful as the one they lost during the terrorist attack. This new transmitter could only reach about a third of their listening audience. Fewer listeners meant less sponsorship revenue for the station.

Unfortunately, the rented transmitter broke down about a month ago, and they are in desperate need of funds to get back on the air. Once they receive this funding, they plan to expand their listening audience to include all of Iraq and its neighbors. They are also planning on broadcasting in Persian to reach the women of Iran, who have been oppressed for nearly 30 years.

The radio station can be the place for women in Iraq and throughout the Middle East to learn about the issues that will affect their lives. The right to educate one's self and to be heard are cornerstones of our own democracy, and these characteristics should be carried over into the new Iraq.

The station's 28 full-time and part-time staff risk their lives every day by going to work. These people are Iraqi patriots, and I am confident their sacrifices will be rewarded.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had a chance to speak to President Bush about the station and he was very enthusiastic about the role it will play in a democratic Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this station and the resolution. I would like to thank members of the Iraqi Women's Caucus and the International Relations Committee. I would also like to thank Representatives OSBORNE, TAUSCHER, GRANGER, SOLIS, my colleague from New York, Mr. ACKERMAN and, of course, my colleague from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Chairman HYDE and Ranking Member LANTOS for their strong support of this station and this resolution. This has been a bipartisan effort from the start, and I hope we can continue to work together.

Mr. Speaker, with all the bad news that is coming out of Iraq, we must recognize those who are really trying to make a free Iraq. Democracy takes a long time. We can do this, but we all must work together.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) who is going to close our debate, the cochair of the Iraqi Women's Caucus here in the House.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned, I have served as a co-

chair of the Iraqi Women's Caucus. Some people may say, well, why would you have a Women's Caucus? The reason is at one point we were meeting with Paul Wolfowitz, and Paul was mentioning the fact that women had been subjugated in Iraq, had not been given a voice. So at that time Jennifer Dunn and I thought that maybe doing something to encourage Iraqi women would be helpful, because women tend to be oriented toward family, toward children, and they tend not to be as isolated by tribes, by ethnicity. As a result, we formed the Iraqi Women's Caucus. We felt that women could be a key to uniting Iraq.

So we are very encouraged by Radio Al Mahaba and the fact that they are now broadcasting in three languages. They do not recognize differences between the Shiia, the Kurds and the Sunnis; and they devote themselves almost entirely to women's issues. We feel that this is something that absolutely has to be encouraged.

In talking to Iraqi women who have come to the United States, and we have had many groups who come here, they have said that really Iraq is not as divided as most people in the United States believe, because there is intermarriage and there are cousins who are from one tribe or another and they all are related. So we feel that endeavors such as this are really important.

Mr. Speaker, we particularly want to commend the staff at the radio station, Al Mahaba, for their bravery, for their fortitude, and for what they are doing to try to bring Iraq together. I think one thing that we will find is that humanity has certain common instincts and needs, and certainly the desire to nurture on the part of women, and men as well, the desire to have strong families, the desire to have our children have a better life than what we had is something that is common to all of us.

So as we point out these things and as this radio station capitalizes on those instincts, I think we certainly are moving toward a better day in Iraq.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 784, which commends and supports Radio Al Mahaba, Iraq's first and only radio station for women.

In the midst of all the bad news coming out of Iraq, it is important that we recognize one of the positive developments there. Radio Al Mahaba provides a unique service to the citizens of Iraq, particularly the women. It allows Iraqi women to express their opinions about issues important to them, including women's rights.

For Iraq to have any kind of future, there must be full participation and equal treatment under the law for women in Iraq. The voices of Iraqi women must be heard in all levels of government, the private sector, in schools, and in the media. I am pleased that today this body officially goes on the record in support of these efforts.

However, we should not stop here. We must continue to encourage the leadership in Iraq to protect the rights of women, particularly in the amendment process for the constitution. Iraqi women and men should be guaranteed equality in the constitution to ensure that women

will never become second-class citizens. Both women and men should have the right to vote, access to equal opportunities, and equal treatment under the law. I am particularly concerned that final language in the constitution could limit women's rights, including in matters such as divorce, child custody, and inheritance.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 5548, the "Empowerment of Iraqi Women Act of 2006," which would establish an Iraqi Women's Fund to help Iraqi women and girls in the areas of political, legal, and human rights, health care, education, training, security, and shelter, and it would authorize \$22,500,000 in each fiscal year 2007, 2008, and 2009 for this fund. I have met with several delegations of Iraqi women during my trips to Iraq and here in Washington. I am always inspired by their strength and courage to speak out in support of equality, even in the face of danger. While these women have hope, they understand that the future is very uncertain.

I know my colleagues join me in expressing our strong support and solidarity with the women of Iraq as they fight for the rights to which they are entitled. I urge a "yes" vote on this important resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 784, a resolution that would celebrate Radio Al Mahaba, the first and only radio station for women in Iraq. Located in a country that only just recently employed a democratic system, Radio Al Mahaba is a true symbol of the rights associated with that system.

In Iraq's history, women were typically denied their basic rights. Radio Al Mahaba, which means "Voice of Women," first went on the air on April 1, 2005 and represents just the opposite of this norm. It has become a forum where women can voice and discuss opinions and practice their freedoms of speech and the press. The station offers speaking opportunities for local volunteers and female journalists. It has been an effective tool not only to reach out to women throughout Iraq, but also to encourage greater female participation in the electoral process. Thus, the establishment of Radio Al Mahaba was truly a step in the right direction towards establishing autonomy and liberties for women in Iraq.

Moreover, Radio Al Mahaba can be a key source for open communication among the people of Iraq, delivering information, such as news alerts, when necessary. It also represents a positive result of the U.S. presence in Iraq.

Today, it is critical that we commend Radio Al Mahaba for its inspiring work and encourage it to stay on the air for years to come. I commend Congresswoman MCCARTHY for proposing H. Res. 784, and I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support House Resolution 784, the resolution that commends Iraq's first and only radio station for women.

As the women of Iraq continue to fight for their rightful place in society, we must recognize the avenues they have engineered for themselves that provide the forum for practicing their right to be heard.

Established in 2005, the radio station is appropriately named al-Mahaba, which means "love" in Arabic, is the first and only independent women's radio station in Iraq. The station was funded by UNIFEM, a United Na-

tions agency that supports women's issues, and is not affiliated to any political party.

Having returned from a recent Codel trip to Iraq, I was very fortunate to have met with women representatives from the radio station who expressed their commitment to women's issues. These strong and courageous women understand much too well the importance of taking a stand against oppression and know they have found a new sense of empowerment.

The station's purpose is to reconcile women's rights, which have been arbitrarily taken away by political regimes; and to encourage them to face their fears and learn to assert themselves as women.

I support the format facilitated by the radio station because it provides women with a long overdue venue where they can tell their stories, share their ambitions and express their fears.

When calling the radio station, these women address a wide range of personal and political issues that have a direct affect on them as women. The format allows them to candidly share enduring numerous beatings from their husbands; share their frustrations with the consistent pressure from religious groups to wear the hijab; and express their fear of having a strict form of Islamic Law imbedded in their society.

For women who feel as forgotten members of society, the radio station provides them a haven to freely express themselves without fear of judgment or persecution. These women endure immense atrocities and oppressions and we must support and recognize their efforts to assert themselves as strong voices in Iraq's society.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WAMP). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 784.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3504. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit the solicitation or acceptance of tissue from fetuses gestated for research purposes, and for other purposes.

CONVEYANCE OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST OF UNITED STATES IN CERTAIN LANDS TO CLINT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 860) to provide for the conveyance of the reversionary interest of the United States in certain lands to the Clint Independent School District, El Paso County, Texas.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 860

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—Subject to section 2, the Secretary of State shall execute and file in the appropriate office such instrument as may be necessary to release the reversionary interest of the United States in the land referred to in subsection (b).

(b) LAND DESCRIBED.—The land described in this subsection consists of Tracts 4-B, 5, and 7, Block 14, San Elizario Grant, County of El Paso, State of Texas.

SEC. 2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

The release under section 1 shall be made upon condition that the Clint Independent School District in the County of El Paso, State of Texas, use any proceeds received from the disposal of such land for public educational purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 860, a bill to provide for the conveyance of the reversionary interest of the United States in certain lands to the Clint Independent School District of El Paso County, Texas.

In 1940, the Clint District School received 20 acres of land that the United States Government had obtained by treaty with Mexico. The Department of State retained reversionary interests in the parcel. Because of legislation passed in 1957, Clint was able to trade the land for another piece of land in which the U.S. Government also had a reversionary interest. The Clint School District still owns that piece of land.

During the 105th Congress, Congressman REYES introduced legislation, a similar bill to the one before us, which would have provided for the conveyance of the reversionary interest of the United States in this land to the Clint Independent School District. This legislation became public law number 105-169 on April 24, 1998, but a drafting error led to the misidentification of the land in question and thus rendered this public law obsolete. This bill before us, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 860, corrects that error.

Mr. Speaker, because the land in question still lies outside of Clint's boundaries, regulations prevent the school district from developing it. H.R. 860 will allow Clint to sell its land in